

## **IDENTITY FORMATION IN GIBRALTAR**

Peter Gold

### *Abstract*

The British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar in the Iberian Peninsula has been a British possession since 1704 and has been British by treaty since 1713. Spain has attempted to reclaim sovereignty of 'the Rock' ever since, culminating in a 16-year blockade from 1969. As the results of a survey show, despite a population whose origins are more evidently Mediterranean than British, the inhabitants have remained fiercely attached to Britain and in the process have created a hybrid identity of 'British Gibraltar' which is more determined by political than ethnic factors, is based on 'not-Spanish' identity markers and is not unrelated to three uninterrupted centuries of British jurisdiction.

*(107 words)*

### *Biographical details*

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*(78 words)*

Gibraltar – the British Overseas Territory whose sovereignty is claimed by Spain - offers a good example of how the identity of the inhabitants of an enclave have been formed by centuries of cultural detachment from and decades of political dispute with the neighbouring larger territory. Given the location of the 'Rock' (as it has come to be referred to) at the western end of the gateway of the Mediterranean, this identity has inevitably also been shaped by geopolitical factors. In order to contextualise the detachment, the dispute and the geopolitics, an historical perspective is useful.

British Gibraltar goes back to the early days of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. On 1 August 1704, as part of the Wars of the Spanish Succession, an Anglo-Dutch force began the bombardment of the fortified town of Gibraltar on the southernmost tip of the Iberian Peninsula. After three days of battle Gibraltar was successfully seized. Of the 4,000 inhabitants, all but 70 fled across the isthmus into the Spanish hinterland. Initially Gibraltar was garrisoned by Dutch and English regiments, but a mixture of Jews, Moroccans and other civilians from elsewhere in Europe were allowed to come back to the town.<sup>1</sup>

In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht (designed to ensure that the thrones of Spain and France would never be united) required the Dutch to remove their troops from Gibraltar and, in Article X, assigned the territory to Britain. Although the drafting of the Article was unclear and has led to arguments between Britain and Spain as to its meaning ever since, the clause that has hung over the

governance of the territory is that it shall be 'held and enjoyed absolutely with all manner of right for ever' by Britain, followed by the distinctly archaic reversionary clause that if Britain decided to 'grant, sell, or by any means to alienate therefrom the propriety of [...] Gibraltar', then 'the preference of having the same shall always be given to the Crown of Spain before any others'.<sup>2</sup> The principal positive aspect of Utrecht for the Gibraltarians is that Britain's possession of the Rock has been protected by an internationally recognised treaty for over three centuries, and for over two hundred years there has been no attempt by Spain to seize the territory by force. The main difficulty of the Treaty for Gibraltarians is the reversionary clause. It has not only prevented Britain from granting independence to Gibraltar but has also meant that the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, established in 1962, sees the resolution of its status as a bilateral issue for Britain and Spain and has never called for its independence. Modern Gibraltarian politicians have always argued that they do not seek independence from Britain, but that position must be viewed in the context of the fact that it is not an option, since Britain would not countenance the strong objections that would ensue both from the UN and (even more so) from Spain.<sup>3</sup>

In the early years of the 18th century, Britain was more focused on the struggle for political dominance within Europe than control of the Strait of Gibraltar and consequently Gibraltar was accorded relatively marginal geopolitical significance. This is borne out by the fact that Britain made

several attempts to bargain Gibraltar away, with the Balearic island of Minorca (which the Treaty of Utrecht had also given to Britain) **being** seen as more useful (particularly for keeping **a watching** eye on the French).<sup>4</sup> But Britain held on to Gibraltar, often out of bloody-mindedness when France or Spain conspired to seize it, especially during the so-called Great Siege between 1779 and 1783, part of the Franco-Spanish hostilities against Britain and the last occasion when Spain attempted to retake Gibraltar by force.

For most of the 19th century **Spain was in no position to challenge British possession of Gibraltar, given that it was 'torn apart by faction, the Carlist civil wars, Catalan and Basque nationalism, revolution and recurring military coups'.**<sup>5</sup> Gibraltar was **therefore** able to enjoy unbroken peace and modest prosperity as it developed as a civil entity. As a consequence, it ceased to be seen by Britain solely as a military garrison and naval base that could be bartered in exchange for more advantageous territory. In 1830 Britain took the significant step of changing the status of Gibraltar from 'The town and garrison of Gibraltar in the Kingdom of Spain' to 'the Crown Colony of Gibraltar', with responsibility transferred from the War Office to the Colonial Office, while at the same time legal institutions were established and a police force was formed. In the context of the establishment of a definable identity amongst the inhabitants of the territory, these administrative shifts should not be underestimated, for they signified recognition of a developing civil society with which all citizens could identify.

By this time the population had reached about 15,000 and it grew slowly but steadily so that by the end of the 19th century it had reached 19,000. The vast majority – nearly 17,000 – were Gibraltar-born citizens with British nationality, although in origin they were a mixture of people from across the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup> One historian suggests that in the latter half of the nineteenth century the population was just beginning to become 'Gibraltarian' because of the common sharing of misery, particularly the ravages of disease.<sup>7</sup> Another historian argues that by the beginning of the 20th century the British public had established an 'emotional, albeit somewhat irrational, attachment to the place'.<sup>8</sup>

From a geopolitical perspective Gibraltar's significance had begun to change with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, but during the First World War the development of the U-boat submarine undermined the strategic value of Gibraltar as a means of preventing the enemy from entering or leaving the Mediterranean. According to Hills, 'that Gibraltar was as useful as it was, was due far more to British diplomats and the Foreign Office than to its geographical position'.<sup>9</sup> The picture was very different during World War Two, once Churchill had decided to make the Mediterranean the focal point of the war. Gibraltar became the base for the naval fleet which was tasked with keeping a route open to the Middle East, disrupting German supplies and (following the decision of the Allies to undertake landings in North Africa) to service convoys supporting the invasion force. Gibraltar's dockyard 'at last played that essential role for which its proponents had argued for two

centuries'.<sup>10</sup> In addition the small Gibraltar airfield (built on the isthmus between the Campo and the Rock) provided hundreds of aircraft for fighter and anti-submarine cover. 'Gibraltar was to be more useful to Britain and her allies during the years 1940-5 than at any time since 1713.'<sup>11</sup>

This contribution to the success of the Allies in North Africa had a significant impact on Britain's subsequent attachment to the 'Rock'. As for the inhabitants, almost all were evacuated, with the majority going to Britain. This had the effect of strengthening the ties between the citizens of the territory and the colonial power, including those who hitherto had had little personal connection with Britain, and this will have been an important factor in the development of their identity. The first signs of self-government in Gibraltar began to appear after the War, when (as often happens following the social upheaval that modern war causes) there was a new political order in which the dominant force came to be the Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights (AACR). Its main objective was to obtain self-government – an important step in the establishment of Gibraltar's identity – and this was first achieved in November 1950 via a Legislative Council. It also has to be remembered that post-War Gibraltar sat right next to Franco's Spain, which had given tacit support to the Axis powers during WW2 even if officially it had remained neutral.

Another aspect of the new political order brought about by WW2 was the beginning of the end of colonialism, marked by UN Resolution 1514 of

December 1960. At Spain's request the United Nations Decolonisation Committee discussed the question of Gibraltar for the first time in September 1963, but no conclusions were reached. Discussions did not resume until the next session in September and October 1964, and it was then that the Spanish Government threatened for the first time to cut communications with Gibraltar.

At the end of the session on 16 October 1964 the Committee noted that there was 'a disagreement, even a dispute, between the UK and Spain over the status and the situation of the territory of Gibraltar' <sup>12</sup> and it called upon the two sides to negotiate. However, Britain's representative did not accept that there was a dispute over the status of Gibraltar and said that the British Government would not feel bound by the terms of any recommendations the Committee might make on questions of sovereignty, which in any case they were not prepared to discuss with Spain.

Over a five-year period futile attempts to negotiate did take place and Spain's frustration at the lack of progress led to growing restrictions on movement and communication across the border with Gibraltar. Britain called a referendum in 1967 inviting Gibraltarians to choose between continued association with Britain or Spanish sovereignty. The vote was almost unanimous in favour of the former. Extraordinarily the UN supported Spain in arguing that the referendum contravened several UN resolutions.

As relations between Britain and Spain deteriorated and Spain's threats increased, Britain had constitutional talks with Gibraltar culminating in the 1969 Constitution. The Order was published in May of that year followed by elections to the new House of Assembly in July. The Preamble included a declaration to the effect that 'Gibraltar would remain part of Her Majesty's Dominions unless and until an Act of Parliament provides otherwise,' but more significantly it also included the commitment from the British Government that it will 'never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes'.<sup>13</sup> Ever since then this commitment has given the Gibraltarians a virtual power of veto as far as the transfer of sovereignty is concerned, and has given the British Government a let-out clause over the aspect of the issue in which Spain is interested above all others. Because of the opportunity it provided for the status quo to be maintained, it proved to be the single most significant statement made on the sovereignty of Gibraltar since the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht itself. Franco was so incensed by British and Gibraltarian defiance that two months after the approval of the new Constitution he imposed a total blockade, cutting off all links between Spain and Gibraltar by land, sea, air and telecommunications, which lasted for 16 years. This isolation and the hardships that it caused was to have a profound effect on the attitudes of Gibraltarians to their neighbours and was one of the most significant factors in the formation of their identity in recent times.



The constitutional position of the territory remained unchanged between 1969 and 2006. In the interim Britain and Spain tried to reach an accommodation by agreeing in 1984 through the Brussels Declaration to discuss all of the issues relating to Gibraltar, including sovereignty.<sup>14</sup> Between 1984 and 1997 on a more-or-less annual basis the two sides did indeed discuss sovereignty, but Britain showed no signs of being willing to negotiate. As a consequence Spain felt constrained to use a variety of non-cooperation tactics in order to highlight its frustration at a lack of progress on what was for them the main issue of sovereignty. The most popular tactic was to cause long delays at the frontier crossing between Gibraltar and Spain, which had been opened in 1985 prior to Spain's accession to the (then) European Community the following year. For ordinary **Gibraltarians** these border delays were the most explicit reminder of life during the blockade as well as of their separateness from the rest of the Peninsula.

In 2001 Britain and Spain began an attempt to reach an agreement on the sharing of sovereignty without considering the views of the Gibraltarians beforehand. There were too many **non-negotiable** issues for Britain and Spain ever to have **secured** such an agreement, **not the least of which were Gibraltar's military facilities. Their contribution to the defeat of the Axis powers had underscored Gibraltar's strategic value in the 1940s and ever since then its geopolitical significance has figured prominently both for Britain and more widely for its NATO allies. During the Cold War Gibraltar acted as a surveillance post both for the Royal Navy and for reconnaissance aircraft,**

while the war in the South Atlantic over the Falklands / Malvinas highlighted its role as a forward supply base. Looking to the future Gibraltar was, as a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Defence put it, a 'vital forward operational base' which was 'a thousand miles closer than Britain to any likely area of military engagement'.<sup>15</sup> Even though the traditional strategies of deploying ships, aircraft and troops have changed considerably in recent times, the need for rapid response units arguably makes the strategic value of Gibraltar more rather than less significant, and at the same time the base continues to offer important communications facilities in a post-9/11 world. Despite the fact that Britain and Spain are both EU and NATO members, Britain (with support behind the scenes from the United States) made it clear during the 2001-02 discussions over sovereignty that the military facilities in Gibraltar would remain under British control.<sup>16</sup> This geopolitical imperative should have provided sufficient reassurance for the Gibraltarians that an agreement between Britain and Spain on sharing sovereignty would prove impossible to achieve, but just to be sure the Gibraltar Government decided on a pre-emptive strike by holding their own referendum in November 2002, in which the population almost unanimously opposed the sharing of sovereignty. This act of rebellion by Gibraltarians in holding a referendum against the wishes of the British Government – the Foreign Secretary of the day called it 'eccentric'<sup>17</sup> - was a further marker of their self-confidence as a community, although the fact that the British Government was prepared to discuss the sharing of sovereignty in the first place caused some damage to relations between Gibraltar and London. However, as a consequence of the

referendum the issue of sovereignty has been put on the back burner ever since, although Spain has made it plain that a transfer of sovereignty remains its long-term objective.

In the interim in 1999 the British Government began a process of the constitutional modernization of its remaining dependencies by inviting them to put forward proposals that would allow for greater local autonomy and better governance.<sup>18</sup> Gibraltar's House of Assembly spent several years working on such proposals, which it eventually sent to London in 2004 and Britain and Gibraltar finally reached agreement on a new Constitution on 17 March 2006.<sup>19</sup> The referendum to ratify it in November 2006 was seen as an act of self-determination by the Gibraltarians, and Britain and Gibraltar now agree that their relationship is non-colonial. However, Gibraltar is still a colony in the eyes of the international community because the UN does not consider the process that Gibraltar has undergone meets its criteria for decolonisation (which are that the former colony has to have achieved either independence, free association and/or integration with the former administering power, and the latter has no reserve powers to legislate).

Even if Gibraltar cannot and does not wish to achieve political independence, there is no doubt that it has achieved a high degree of economic independence over the past twenty years. Much of this has been based on its offshore tax status, as well as the development of VAT-free trading, tourism, bunkering, online gaming and acting as a hub for cruise liners.

Finally it is worth noting that since 2004 Gibraltar has been participating (for the first time in its own right) in a three-way dialogue with Britain and Spain aimed at the resolution of some of the practical bones of contention such the use of the airport, traffic flows at the border, telecommunications issues and pensions for former Spanish workers in Gibraltar. Significant progress has been made, but Spain has made it clear that it sees the process as a means to the ultimate end of the transfer of sovereignty, even though sovereignty has not been discussed through the Forum.

This background to the relationship between Gibraltarians, Spain and the UK will be seen to be of significance when considering how the Gibraltarians identity has been formed and how they themselves perceive it, since these will inevitably have been coloured by many of the actions and events described. In order to establish their identity formation and their perception of it, a survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire to gather information on several influential factors.<sup>20</sup>

The questionnaire was sent to every tenth domestic entry listed in the Gibraltar telephone directory. The number of completed questionnaires returned was 150, representing 18% of the total distributed. This provides a useful sample from which some tentative inferences may be made, although two major caveats must be made. Firstly, the disadvantages of using a telephone directory are recognised: it evidently excludes people who are not

subscribers to the telephone network, it tends to produce male rather than female respondents (as males tend to be entered in the directory as the subscriber where there is more than one user), and it tends to produce more replies from older rather than younger respondents (fewer of whom – even in pre-cell phone days - were subscribers to land-line telephones). Secondly, a survey conducted by a British researcher on Gibraltarian identity may well have elicited more responses from those with a stronger or longer-standing sense of identity with Gibraltar or sense of connection with Britain and these factors may have affected the overall picture created by the survey results.

#### Insert Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the age of the respondents. For the reason suggested above, it is not surprising that the results show a low response rate amongst those under 40 (23%). However, amongst the 40 to 70 age-range there is a good spread of respondents.

#### Insert Figure 2

On the basis of gender there were almost three male respondents for every female. This was also recognised above as a consequence of the method used for acquiring names and addresses. However, as indicated in Figure 2, there was a reasonably good representation of female respondents in two of

the age-ranges: 43% of those aged 40 or under and 42% of those aged 70 or over.

### Insert Figure 3

Figure 3 indicates where the respondents were born. Almost three-quarters were born in Gibraltar itself, with scarcely any gender difference in the place of birth. It is interesting to note that a higher number of females than males were born in Spain, although the numbers concerned are too small to be statistically significant. The age profile for place of birth indicates that 58% of those born in the UK are in the 51-60 age-group, a fact that can be explained by the fact that their mothers would have been evacuated to the UK during WW2 in order to give birth.

### Insert Figure 4

Those not born in Gibraltar were asked how long they have lived on the Rock. As shown in Figure 4 almost 54% had lived there for over 50 years. Only 12% of the respondents were born outside Gibraltar or had lived there for less than half a century. Clearly there have been relatively few newcomers to the Rock amongst the respondents, although it is recognised that in a survey about identity more people who identify strongly with the territory are likely to respond.

### Insert Figure 5

The parents of the respondents, especially their mothers (see Figure 5) are less likely to have been born in Gibraltar than the respondents themselves. Only 61.5% had a Gibraltar-born mother and almost one in four had a mother born in Spain. This applied particularly to Gibraltarians aged between 40 and 60, almost 30% of whom had a Spanish-born mother. Assuming an age of 20 to 25 at the onset of motherhood, these mothers would probably have been born between 1915 and 1939, before the establishment of the regime of General Franco and including the years of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), when many Spaniards sought refuge in Gibraltar. The proportion of Gibraltarians with a mother born in Spain during the Franco regime from 1939 to 1975 fell to 20%, suggesting perhaps that it was less acceptable for a Gibraltarian man to marry a Spanish woman during that period. It fell even further when those born after the start of the Spanish blockade of Gibraltar (1969-85) are considered, since of the respondents aged under 31 only 13% had a Spanish-born mother. It is possible that the figure has started to rise again with the greater degree of openness between Gibraltar and democratic Spain that has been witnessed since the re-opening of the land border.

### Insert Figure 6

The picture is rather different with regard to the birthplace of fathers, with only 6% having a Spanish-born father while over three-quarters have a father

born in Gibraltar (see Figure 6). The low figure for Spanish-born fathers suggests that Gibraltarian women chose not to opt for the subservient role that most wives of Spanish men played during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>21</sup> and also that Spanish men who marry Gibraltarian women tend not to move to Gibraltar to live. There was a difference between the proportion of mothers (9.5%) and fathers (14.2%) of respondents born in the UK, suggesting that UK-born men were more likely to move to Gibraltar after marriage to a Gibraltarian woman than vice versa.

The survey indicated, therefore, that almost three-quarters of Gibraltarians in the sample were born on the Rock and that the figure would be closer to 80% if some had not been evacuated because of the War. It also indicated that of those not born in Gibraltar the majority had lived there for most of their lives. In addition, taking mothers and fathers together, two-thirds of Gibraltarians had both parents who were born in the territory and 82% had at least one parent who was Gibraltar-born. On the basis of these observations it could be said that there was a well-rooted, stable Gibraltarian population over at least two generations.

#### Insert Figure 7

Looking back further, however, it appeared that that stability was even more striking. Figure 7 shows how far back the respondents were able to trace their ancestors in Gibraltar. Almost 85% could go back at least 100 years, 56%



could extend at least 150 years while one quarter claimed at least 200 years. One in thirteen (7.4%) could trace their ancestry at least to the middle of the 18th century, and in some cases all the way back to the first British settlers in 1704. The mean figure was 147 years for all respondents, which (taking 25 years to represent one generation) implied that the typical Gibraltarian could trace his/her ancestry on the Rock back six generations. This deep-rooted connection with the territory would inevitably be reflected in the inhabitants' sense of identity.

#### Insert Figure 8

A particularly interesting feature regarding the identity of the Gibraltarians was where the residents' ancestors originated from. Despite a strong sense of Britishness expressed both politically and culturally by modern Gibraltarians (see Figures 9 – 11 below), Figure 8 indicates that little more than one quarter originated from Britain and that those of Spanish origin were not far short of one quarter.<sup>22</sup> As later analysis demonstrates, the mix of British, Spanish (including Minorcans), Italians (mainly from the western port of Genoa), Portuguese, Maltese and others has, over time, produced a hybrid population that fully identifies with Britain in terms of political alignment whilst at the same time creating a distinctive cultural identity of its own.

#### Insert Figure 9

This hybrid identity is illustrated in an analysis of the respondents' answers to the question: 'What do you consider to be your nationality' (Figure 9). Those surveyed were given the option to respond 'Gibraltarian', 'British' or 'Other'. They were not invited to indicate 'Gibraltarian' and 'British', but a notably high 45% of respondents did so. This suggests that a substantial number of people saw themselves as a distinct entity of 'British Gibraltarian', neither exclusively Gibraltarian nor exclusively British. Slightly more (73.7%) answered 'Gibraltarian' than those who answered 'British' (69.6%). A breakdown on the basis of gender shows that slightly more men than women considered themselves to be British, and an analysis on the basis of age shows that those under 30 were more likely to consider themselves to be Gibraltarian, while those between 51 and 60 were more likely to consider themselves to be British (most likely on account of the fact that many of them had been born in Britain). Three age-groups showed over 80% who considered themselves to be Gibraltarian, against only one age-group with over 80% who considered themselves to be British.

The most interesting aspect of the replies to this question is that technically there is no such thing as Gibraltarian nationality. Most people born in Gibraltar qualify for the status of a citizen of the British Dependent Territories and are able to register as British citizens under the British Nationality Act of 1981. A Gibraltarian is someone who is registered as such under the Gibraltarian Status Act of 1962 (amended 1999), which provides for registration as of right if one of nine conditions is met, while there are also

provisions for registration by order of the Governor.<sup>23</sup> Some but not all British subjects resident in Gibraltar can be registered as Gibraltarians, and there will be others who consider themselves to be Gibraltarians but are not registered as such. In none of these cases does registration as a Gibraltarian confer Gibraltarian nationality, only status. Thus registered Gibraltarians can claim to have British nationality and Gibraltarian status. Despite this, nearly three-quarters of the respondents considered themselves to have Gibraltarian nationality, even though this is legally impossible. Therefore a substantial proportion of Gibraltarians, who may or may not be aware of the legal limitations to the question, when asked about their 'nationality', identified themselves in terms of where they were born and their attachment to the territory of their birth rather than recognizing the valid but technical distinction between 'nationality' and 'registration'.

#### Insert Figure 10

Those surveyed were also asked about their passport. This question also gave them the opportunity to distinguish between 'British' and 'Gibraltarian', or to combine the two. Unlike the question on 'nationality' it was open-ended, and respondents had to write in their answer. Although 65.5% answered that they held a 'British' or 'UK' or 'English' passport, 32.4% answered that they held either a British Gibraltarian or a Gibraltarian one. As with nationality, the legal position is that all passports held by Gibraltarians with British nationality are British passports, whether or not they are issued in Gibraltar, so technically

there is no such thing as a 'British Gibraltar' or a 'Gibraltar' passport. Far fewer (only 6.7%) created for themselves the hybrid of a British Gibraltar passport than was the case with the question on nationality, but almost one third of respondents identified themselves through their passports as more than just British (rather less than the 45% who did so when asked about their nationality). Not surprisingly, as Figure 10 shows, those who saw themselves as having 'Gibraltar' nationality were more likely to see themselves as holders of a 'Gibraltar' passport.

#### Insert Figure 11

Those surveyed were asked about their first language (Figure 11) – although the term was left undefined. English was claimed as the first language by 87.1%, although this is below the 90.5% who were born either in Gibraltar or the UK. However, 3.4% said that the local form of speech (a hybrid language called 'Llanito', combining English and Spanish but also incorporating lexical items from Genoese and Hebrew) was their first language and these accounted for the difference. Intriguingly Spanish was claimed as a first language by 9.5%, despite the fact that only 5.4% were born in Spain, no doubt because the extra 4.1% felt that Spanish was the language that they used most.

#### Insert Figure 12

There is also a high incidence of Spanish spoken. Those surveyed were asked: 'If Spanish is not your first language; do you speak Spanish fluently /

moderately well / a little / not at all' (Figure 12). A high figure of 75.8% claimed to speak Spanish fluently, and a further 18.2% answered 'moderately well'. The youngest respondents had the highest percentage of those who answered 'fluently' (although they were matched by those in the 51-60 age group, many of whom had been born in Britain), indicating that neither the closure of the border nor evacuation had any effect on the acquisition of Spanish by those living on the Rock.

It has always been the case that for a variety of reasons Spanish has been spoken on the Rock even after almost all the Spanish left in 1704 and the language has been widely used in everyday life, both in the home and in the workplace. As one survey respondent remarked, people who live in border towns (which is what Gibraltar is in one sense) can usually speak the language spoken on the other side of the border. In addition media exposure to Spanish has increased in modern times through access to cross-border radio and television. To judge by the high percentage who claimed English as their first language (even though most would also have been fluent in Spanish), it is clear that language as an identifier is very strong in Gibraltar, although it is equally clear that the practicalities of daily life have made the acquisition and use of the language of the 'surrounding' territory both natural and desirable. That said, the use of 'llanito' is more widespread than the responses indicate,<sup>24</sup> and no doubt this would have been indicated if those surveyed had been asked about their usage of it.

Three major conclusions emerge from this study of Gibraltarians regarding influences in identity formation in enclaves. First, the most important factors in this case are political/historical rather than ethnic. Although people of British descent constitute the largest group, they are only about a quarter of the total, yet there is an almost universal cultural attachment to Britain and a collective desire to remain closely attached to it politically. This remains true even though at times Gibraltarians have felt let down by the British Government, most recently during the joint sovereignty discussions in 2001-02. The strategy of the Franco regime to attempt to starve the Gibraltarians into submission over 16 years was clearly counter-productive; as one Gibraltarian woman (aged 18 in 1969) put it in 2002: "When the border was closed, we got much closer to each other, and now, even though the border is open, relations are not the same as they were".<sup>25</sup> Most Gibraltarians over the age of thirty will remember what it was like to live under the blockade, while since then even younger Gibraltarians will have experienced frustration at the border crossing, and everyone is aware of the fact that Spanish government policy remains unchanged with regard to its ultimate sovereignty claims.

Second, identity markers are used to reflect both a distinctiveness from Spain (although this does not extend to rejecting the use of the language of the nation-state that wishes to incorporate the enclave) and an attachment to the way of life established by an administering, protective state (albeit in this case one that is over a thousand miles away). This distinctiveness on the one hand

and attachment on the other **manifest themselves** in the construction of a hybrid identity of 'British Gibraltar', which is certainly a cultural and emotional concept rather than a legal one. **This hybridity is not quite the same as the concept often used in post-colonial theory<sup>26</sup> referring to the mixture of cultural indicators and practices from the colonised and colonising cultures, since the colonised culture is itself a hybrid composed of the cultures of those who over the past three centuries have contributed to the blend that is 'Gibraltar'.**<sup>27</sup> The hybridity of 'British Gibraltar' is rather prompted by two distinct but identifiable needs of a substantial proportion of the territory's modern inhabitants: first, a desire to identify closely with but not indistinguishably from 'being British' in order to provide themselves with a unique kind of Britishness (the majority do not see themselves or want to be seen as just 'British', largely because three-quarters of them are not British by descent but by cultural adoption); second, a need to identify themselves in terms that give them a doubly distinctive identity – British *and* Gibraltar – in contrast to the Spaniards whom they do not wish to become. This is what Meethan calls 'a self-conscious deployment of difference', whereby to claim that one belongs to a hybrid culture is '... an act of self-definition'.<sup>28</sup> It is also what has driven Gibraltarians to argue for self-determination and to seek a high degree of autonomy in their governance. Spain argues **with some justification** that since the **late** 1970s and the adoption of a Spanish constitution that is both democratic and devolutionist there is little justification from a political perspective for the Gibraltarians to reject Spanish sovereignty in Gibraltar, **given that** their distinctiveness would be fully

protected. That has been insufficient, however, to overcome three centuries of British administration, judicial and education systems, traditions and cultural influence, **plus decades, if not centuries, of (at best) negative and (at worst) hostile relations with Spain,** not to mention the **markedly higher** standard of living that Gibraltarians have enjoyed compared to that of the hinterland of the Spanish Campo de Gibraltar.

**Third,** the length of time that inhabitants can trace roots in **Gibraltar is a significant factor in determining their identity.** Part of Spain's problem in trying to 'woo' the Gibraltarians, as they have been attempting to do in recent years, is the fact that the attachment to Britain has lasted for such a long time. As one teenager expressed it, it is not a question of patriotism but of habit: 'I think it's a misconception that we're very patriotic about being British. It's just, we're British because we've grown up being it and it's part of being Gibraltarian'.<sup>29</sup> With Gibraltarians being able to boast an average of six generations of ancestors who have lived **under the influence of** a particular culture, they will not willingly exchange that heritage for something different, especially when they have been **shown** such hostility in relatively recent times by the preceding regime to the current one. The lesson from Gibraltar is that if a predatory state wishes to incorporate an enclave, it would be a good idea not to leave it for three centuries, and certainly not to try and starve the inhabitants into submission.

*(Text: 6506 words including Notes)*



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## Notes

1. For a summary of British Gibraltar's early history, see P. Gold, Gibraltar: British or Spanish? (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 6-14. For more extensive histories, on which this summary is based, see G. Hills, Rock of Contention (London: Robert Hale, 1974); W. Jackson, The Rock of the Gibraltarians (Associated University Presses, 1987); M. Harvey, Gibraltar (Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount, 1996).
2. For the full text of Article X of the Treaty, together with an exploration of its meaning, see Hills, pp. 222-5. There was no reference in the Treaty to the isthmus that joins the 'Rock' to the rest of the peninsula and Spain has often treated Britain's occupation of the isthmus, on which the airport is sited, as a separate dispute.
3. Since the establishment of political parties in Gibraltar in the 1940s there has never been an independence party. **By contrast** there has been an Integration with Britain Party, whose leader Robert Peliza held the post of Chief Minister from 1969-72. See Gold (note 1) p. 97.
4. **With two interruptions, Britain held possession of Minorca until the island was finally returned to Spain permanently under the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.**
5. **Harvey (note 1) p. 119.**
6. See Figure 8 below.
7. Jackson (note 1) p. 245.
8. Harvey (note 1) p. 129.
9. **Hills (note 1) p. 400.**
10. **Harvey (note 1) p. 147.**
11. **Hills (note 1) p. 420.**
12. D. Morris and R. Haigh, Britain, Spain and Gibraltar 1945-90 (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 16.

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13. For the text of the Constitution see [http://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/constitution/gib\\_constitution.pdf](http://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/constitution/gib_constitution.pdf) (accessed 10 September 2008).
14. For the text of the Brussels Declaration, see Gold (note 1) p. 341.
15. [The Guardian](#), 10 May 2002.
16. See P. Gold, 'Sovereignty negotiations and Gibraltar's military facilities: how two 'red-line' issues became three', [Diplomacy and Statecraft](#), 15 (2004), No. 2, pp. 375-384.
17. Quoted in Gold (note 1) p. 310.
18. [Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories](#) (HMSO, Cmnd 4264), March 1999 (available at [http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf3/fco\\_pdf\\_overseasterritories17](http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf3/fco_pdf_overseasterritories17), accessed 18 September 2008).
19. For the text of the 2006 constitution, see [Hansard](#), 27 March 2006, Cols 44-46WS, (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060327/wmstext/60327m02.htm>) (accessed 10 September 2008)
20. The survey was conducted in 2000 and the results originally published in [International Journal of Iberian Studies](#), 14 (2001), No. 2, pp. 68-79 (copyright of original article held by Intellect). References to the age groups of respondents should therefore be referred back to that date. Unfortunately it has not been possible to conduct a more recent survey in time for the publication of this article.
21. E. G. Archer, [Gibraltar, Identity and Empire](#) (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 43.
22. The standard work on the demography of Gibraltar is H. W. Howes' work, [The Gibraltarian](#), first published in 1950. The data here is from Archer (note 14) pp. 34-50. Archer based his analysis on the 19,000 names in the Gibraltar Register of Electors for 1995, together with any other reliable evidence he could muster, to identify some 2,005 different family names by nationality.
23. For the text of the Act see <http://www.gibraltarlaws.gov.gi/articles/1962-130.pdf> (accessed 18 September 2008).
24. According to M. G Moyer (quoted in Archer [note 14] pp. 111-2), this is especially true of the 'middle class'.
25. [El País](#), 3 November 2002, quoted in Gold (note 1) p. 328.

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26. See R. J.C. Young, Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) and L. Gandhi, Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction (Columbia University Press, 1998).

27. By the same token the local language 'llanito' differs from the post-colonial theorists' 'linguistic hybridity' in that it is as much a cross-border hybrid language (similar to Spanglish or Tex-Mex in North America) rather than a straightforward colonised-colonising mixture. For a thorough study of language in Gibraltar, including 'llanito', see Anja Kellermann, A New New English: Language, Politics and Identity in Gibraltar (Heidelberg: HSSK, 2001).

28. K. Meethan, 'Mobile Cultures? Hybridity, Tourism and Cultural Change', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 1 (2003), No. 1, p. 20. (<http://www.multilingual-matters.net/jtc/001/0011/jtc0010011.pdf>) (accessed 10 October 2008).

29. BBC News Online, 14 March 2002, quoted in Gold (note 1) p. 327.